

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 036385

STADIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MP, US

SUBJECT: US MILITARY OPERATIONS INVOLVING MAURITIUS

1. DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN MONITORING INCREASE IN
NUMBER OF US MILITARY OPERATIONS INVOLVING MAURITIUS IN
1978. BY OUR TALLY, 1978 SCHEDULE NOW INCLUDES:
PORT CALLS BY FOUR SHIPS (TO INCLUDE COCONUT DELIVERY)
IN CONNECTION WITH MAURITIAN INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY
WHICH WE DO NOT THINK POSE ANY PROBLEM; TOTAL OF FIVE
ARIA FLIGHTS -- END JAN (COMPLETED), END FEB (GOM
APPROVAL PENDING), END MARCH (DEPARTMENT HOLDING
CLEARANCE REQUEST) PENDING RECEIPT OF AMPLIFYING INFORMA-
TION, AND TWO TO BE SCHEDULED LATER; NAVY OCEANOGRAPHIC
OFFICE (NAVOCEANO) AIRBORNE ACOUSTIC SURVEY FLIGHT
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ARRIVING APRIL 2 AND DEPARTING APRIL 5, FOR WHICH
CLEARANCE HAS BEEN REQUESTED BY LETTER DIRECTLY TO
EMBASSY.

2. THE ARRIVAL OF TWO AIRCRAFT AT END OF MARCH AND IN
EARLY APRIL IS OBJECT OF DEPARTMENT SCRUTINY, IN VIEW

OF LIKELY PROXIMITY TO PROGRESSIVE PARTIES CONFERENCE
ON DEMILITARIZATION OF THE INDIAN OCEAN (PORT LOUIS 67,
VICTORIA 106). WOULD MMM BE LIKELY TO EXPLOIT PLANNED
VISITS AT THIS TIME FOR ANTI-GOM OR ANTI-US PROPAGANDA,

PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF APPEARANCE (ELECTRONIC DOMES) OF
ARIA AND NAVOCEANO AIRCRAFT AND DARK HINTS WHICH COULD
BE SCATTERED ABOUT THEIR ROLE? WOULD GOM BE LESS LIKELY
TO ACCEPT SUCH FLIGHTS AT THAT TIME, FOR THAT OR ANOTHER
REASON? IF SO, WHAT CAN WE DO TO IMPROVE PROSPECT THAT
GOM WILL PERMIT OPERATIONS AS SCHEDULED? ALTERNATIVELY,
DOES EMBASSY BELIEVE THAT DEPARTMENT SHOULD PRESS FOR
RESCHEDULING OF NAVOCEANO VISIT (ARIA SCHEDULE IS FIXED,
AS IT DOVETAILS WITH WIDE VARIETY OF OTHER LAUNCH-RELATED
ACTIVITIES, AND NAVOCEANO IS TIED TO A TIGHTLY COORDINATED
SCHEDULE)?

3. FYI: SINCE MANY ARIA OPERATIONS INVOLVE SUPPORT FOR
CIVILIAN SPACECRAFT LAUNCHES (MARCH LAUNCH, FOR EXAMPLE,
IS WEATHER SATELLITE), DEPARTMENT IS EXPLORING WITH ARIA
OPERATORS ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO DEMONSTRATE NON-MILITARY,
NON-CONTROVERSIAL NATURE OF OPERATION, UP TO AND INCLUDING
OFFER OF SEAT ON AIRCRAFT FOR A GOM OBSERVER. PROBLEM IS
THAT CANDOR REGARDING NATURE OF SPACECRAFT WOULD NOT
ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE, DUE TO INCLUSION OF CLASSIFIED DOD
MISSIONS IN ARIA SCHEDULE (AS IN FEBRUARY LAUNCH).

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4. OUR INTENT IS TO ENSURE ACCESS, MEET DOD SCHEDULING
REQUIREMENTS, AND NOT SERIOUSLY STRAIN LOCAL TOLERANCE.
FROM HERE IT WOULD SEEM THAT THESE OBJECTIVES ARE BEING
MET; WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ALERTING US IF YOU THINK
CIRCUITS MIGHT OVERLOAD, AND YOUR SUGGESTIONS ON BEST
MEANS OF AVOIDING THAT. VANCE

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